

Message Text

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TAGS: EI, PINT, UK

SUBJECT: COSGRAVE VISIT TO LONDON, JULY 2

REF: STATE 134449

1. SUMMARY: DURING HIS VISIT TO LONDON JULY 2, PRIME MINISTER COSGRAVE GAVE STRONG AND VERY WELCOME PUBLIC SUPPORT TO HEATH'S ULSTER POLICY. HE DESCRIBED PROPOSALS FOR BRITISH WITHDRAWAL FROM NORTHERN IRELAND AS A "PRESCRIPTION FOR CIVIL WAR." HE REJECTED EARLY UNIFICATION OF NORTH AND SOUTH, RE-PARTITION OF ULSTER, OR ANY OTHER SHORT-CUT SOLUTIONS, AND URGED UPON ALL CONCERNED A STEP-BY-STEP, PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO AN ULTIMATE RECONCILIATION OF ALL IRISHMEN. HE REITERATED HIS GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO DO ITS PART TO ACHIEVE SUCH AN OUTCOME. END SUMMARY.
 2. FOLLOWING A THREE-HOUR WORKING LUNCH WITH HEATH JULY 2, COSGRAVE GAVE A 35-MINUTE PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE IRISH EMBASSY. IN THE EVENING HE ADDRESSED THE LARGELY CONSERVATIVE 1900 CLUB. TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE AND TEXT OF THE SPEECH ARE BEING FORWARDED TO DEPARTMENT BY POUCH.
 3. COSGRAVE OPENED THE PRESS CONFERENCE BY EXPLAINING THAT HE COULD NOT DISCUSS DETAILS OF HIS TALKS WITH HEATH, BUT WOULD BE HAPPY TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ON GENERAL RELATED MEASURES. HE THEN EXPRESSED HIS PLEASURE THAT
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THE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS HAD TAKEN PLACE IN NORTHERN

IRELAND AND THAT THE VOTERS HAD TOTALLY REJECTED "THE MEN OF VIOLENCE." FINALLY, HE REITERATED HIS GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO PEACE AND RECONCILIATION BETWEEN ALL OF THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND, AND ITS "WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT AND WORK FORWARD FROM EXISTING REALITIES RATHER THAN A CONCERN WITH ABSTRACT LEGALITIES OR CONSTITUTIONAL DEFINITIONS."

4. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, COSGRAVE VOICED THE HOPE THAT THE NEWLY ELECTED ASSEMBLY WOULD MEET AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE CONSTITUTION BILL IS ENACTED BY PARLIAMENT AND THAT IT WOULD FORM AN EXECUTIVE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. HE SAID NO TIMETABLE HAD BEEN FIXED FOR TRIPARTITE TALKS TO ESTABLISH A COUNCIL OF IRELAND, BUT HOPED THEY COULD BEGIN BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR. THE AGENDA FOR THESE TALKS, HE SAID, WAS COMPLETELY OPEN.

5. COSGRAVE ALSO STRESSED THAT ALL ASPECTS OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF LAW IN NORTHERN IRELAND SHOULD BE IMPARTIAL AND SHOULD BE SEEN TO BE IMPARTIAL. IN CONCLUSION HE SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT AT PRESENT THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO SUGGESTION THAT BRITISH TROOPS WITHDRAW -- A POINT THAT HE UNDERSCORED LATER IN HIS SPEECH TO THE 1900 CLUB.

6. THE SPEECH IN ITS ENTIRETY WAS A COMPASSIONATE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE CONFLICTING ASPIRATIONS AND FEARS IN NORTHERN IRELAND, A REJECTION OF ANY SHORT-CUT SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM, AND AN ELOQUENT PLEA FOR A PATIENT, PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO AN ULTIMATE RECONCILIATION OF ALL IRISHMEN. IT RECEIVED PROMINENT AND FAVORABLE COVERAGE IN THE BRITISH PRESS WHICH NOTED IN PARTICULAR ITS CONCILIATORY TONE, ITS SUPPORT FOR HEATH'S ULSTER POLICY, AND ITS APPEAL TO BRITAIN NOT TO WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS FROM ULSTER.

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